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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1868.

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THE HOMES OF THE PEOPLE.

A HAPPY, wholesome, healthful home is one of the first and most essential requisites for the social and moral well-being of mankind; and yet that is precisely the thing which a vast number—perhaps the great majority—of the industrial orders of society in this country cannot obtain. Whether the working man lives in the country—that is, belongs to the peasant class—or is a unit in the crowded masses congregated in our large towns, he suffers from the paucity of the accommodation he can procure for himself and his family. Overcrowding is everywhere the rule; sufficient space the rare exception. One or two rooms, and these generally of small dimensions and often of faulty construction, have to afford living and sleeping accommodation for a number of persons for whom three, or even four, such apartments would be insufficient. The consequences are that the separation of the sexes in a family and the arrangements needful to the preservation of a sense of modesty, decency, and self-respect are impossible. There is little inducement for husbands and grown-up (or growing-up) sons to seek the domestic hearth when their day's labour is over; for domestic hearth, in the proper sense of the word, they have none to seek. They consequently resort to the public-house tap-room or bar, and there at once dissipate their means, waste their time, and ruin their health and habits. The female portion of a house-

hold, again, have equally small home-comfort. The wife and the daughters are deprived of the companionship and guidance of husbands, fathers, brothers; while, being compelled by the nature of their duties to stay at home, they suffer all the more intensely from the disagreeables prevalent there. The air they breathe is vitiated; cleanliness and order—tidiness in any way—they cannot secure, let them strive ever so much to attain them, in a room or rooms which must serve all purposes of cooking, washing, living, and sleeping for double and even triple the number of persons they are capable of accommodating. No wonder, therefore, that the girls should seek relief in music-halls, dancing-rooms—anywhere in which they can for a time escape the irksomeness of what they must, for lack of better, call home; or that wives and mothers, chained to the fireside, should seek their solace in the "drop of gin," and the useless gossip with equally unhappy neighbours, that are the much too ready and much too common resource of their class. It is needless to peruse the painful picture further: neglected duties, domestic broils, tipling husbands, drunken wives, dissipated sons and giddy daughters (to become tipplers and drunkards, brawlers and drabs, in their turn) are the inevitable results of insufficient and faulty home accommodation, and consequent discomfort.

We have drawn no fanciful or exaggerated picture of the state of things that obtains in this land of wealth and in

this age of so-called civilisation and enlightenment. There are thousands—nay, millions—of families around us who live, and move, and have their being in a home atmosphere that is neither more nor less than moral and physical poison. Matters are bad in the rural districts, as is shown in the reports of the Royal Commissioners on the employment of women and children in agriculture; and they are no better in large towns; nay, they are perhaps even worse, for there the corrective influences of fresh air and outdoor employment are wanting. To remedy, or try to remedy, this state of things, which is both universally admitted and universally lamented—except, perhaps, by a few wrongheaded persons who deem horses and cattle and pigs of more value than human beings—is a task worthy the most earnest thought and the best energies of all who wish well to their kind. The subject is of equal interest to the politician, the philanthropist, the divine, and the social reformer, and to the attention of each and all of these we commend it.

Something is being done here in London by the trustees of Mr. Peabody's fund and the directors of Sir Sidney Waterlow's company, and other similar associations; but their utmost efforts can meet but a small portion of the necessities of the case. More might be accomplished under the provisions of Mr. McCullagh Torrens's Act, lately passed, if it were vigorously worked. But the difficulty is to set the necessary machinery in motion. The difficulties, too,



HAD AN ACCIDENT ON THE ROAD: TOO LATE FOR THE CHRISTMAS DINNER.

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the Parish of St. Mary le Strand, in the County of Middlesex,
THOMAS FOX, 2, Catherine-street, Strand, aforesaid.—
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1868.

SIR JOSEPH NAPIER, **ex-Lord Justice of Appeal**, and twice Lord Chancellor of Ireland under Lord Derby's Government, has been nominated a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in the place of the late Lord Kingsdown. The recommendation was made by Lord Cairns, and was confirmed by the present Lord Chancellor of England. It is the first instance of an Irish Judge being appointed a member of the Judicial Committee.

FRANCE.

THE UNITED STATES.

When President Johnson's Message, a summary of which has already appeared in our columns, was first presented to the Senate, that body refused to hear it read; but, after deliberation, the reading of the Message was permitted. The Senate continues the committee charged with the investigation into the alleged bribery and corruption of the senators during the impeachment trial. A resolution providing for negro suffrage in all the States has been introduced into the Senate by Mr. Wilson, and has been referred to the Judiciary Committee. Mr. Robinson has again offered a resolution demanding the release of the Fenian-American prisoners, which was tabled. Test cases, involving the constitutionality of the Legal Tender and Reconstruction Acts, have been brought before the Supreme Court.

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It is rumoured that President Johnson, at the request of Mr.

SOUTH AMERICA.

The ports of Chili are again opened to Spanish vessels.

THE MINISTERIAL RE-ELECTIONS.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE

Mr. Bright was re-elected at Birmingham without opposition. The right hon. gentleman said when he was elected five weeks ago he had no expectation or intention of putting the constituency to the trouble of reconsidering its choice. He appeared before them in a character which he had assumed with extreme reluctance, Mr. Gladstone, who had been called to office by, doubtless, the willing voice of the Queen, and by the concurrence of the vast majority of the people, soon after he proceeded to the formation of his Administration had asked him to join the Government, and he had reason to know that he made that proposition with the cordial and gracious acquiescence of her Majesty. He had very strong reasons for refusing to change his place in the House of Commons; but those reasons were only personal; and, though he believed them unanswerable by the arguments which were used to induce him to change his position, they were based upon what he considered best for the interest of the great Liberal party and for the public service; and the private and personal reasons he had for refusing office yielded to the public reasons which were so strongly urged upon his consideration, and he had surrendered his inclination, and he might say also his judgment, to the opinions and judgment of his friends. Mr. Gladstone had at first proposed

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUE

THE SECRETARY FOR WAR.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY

THE PRESIDENT OF THE POOR-LAW BOA

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS

In answer to a question, the right hon. gentleman

OTHER MINISTERS.
The other Ministers re-elected were Mr. Forster

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AN EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT is reported in connection with the journey of the Irish mail from London last Saturday. While en route for North Wales, a passenger was seen to stretch forth his arm and brandish a pistol at the moment that an up train from Holyhead was passing. It is believed that the shot was aimed at the driver and the engine.

Mr. Caleb Cushing to Spain to open negotiations with Cuba.

SOUTH AMERICA.

Advices from Lima of Nov. 14, a revolution was in the north and south of Peru, and financial affairs story.

Canal are again opened to Spanish vessels.

THE MINISTERIAL RE-ELECTIONS.

The new Ministers have this week been re-elected, without opposition. Most of the Ministers delivered speeches on the occasion. We give an epitome of the

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY.

Mr. W. E. Gladstone was re-elected for Greenwich, gentleman said that the electors of Greenwich had friends in need and friends indeed. The country led to on one of the clearest questions by the late and everybody, he might say, understood the reply, apprehended especially by the late Minister of the fact not there to challenge the discretion of the late it was evident that, by the verdict which they gave, they had not that confidence which they had in the first case, he believed, upon record that melted away before the Parliament which they had led into existence, without looking that Parliament about asking from it the judgment they had undergone. He had been asked to undertake a task which he found himself almost unequal to; but if he was was willing to make the attempt, his answer was obtained by the conviction of a good and just cause, that in the conduct of great questions which were try he should receive from his countrymen a commendation treatment, his great object being to institutions of the country and to establish unity, concord amongst all classes in the empire. With particular subjects that would call for the immediate new Parliament, he would only refer to them in at least as to show that the Government were not great and heavy duties attached to them. They in a party triumph, and, above all, a triumph of the party—principles which would be embodied in measures which would be necessary to give full effect to reform. There were many imperfections and clinging to the recent bill which would require a; at the same time he would observe that that would not be the first business of the House, were other matters of great public interest have to be decided. Mr. Gladstone said he had at his vote in favour of open voting, and would con-

Another matter that required redress was the her which compound householders now stood. The was also undoubtedly required amendment, and the the people must be earnestly looked to; and to these it not be supposed that Government were indifferent, ly to postpone them. The questions in relation to ital would be considered, and, if possible, a satisfaction arrived at. Mr. Gladstone then adverted to the public expenditure, expressing his inability to understand been so largely increased under the late Government in the future greater economy. It was easy millions to the expenditure of the country, but it was to take them off again. Mr. Gladstone then spoke on the Irish Church question. They had heard a of Pharisical, or at any rate womanish, lamentation of Ireland should have been made a party cry. A plaint never reached his ears. The state of Ireland ch a pitch that it had made itself heard and felt in painful and harrowing manifestations, and it forced consideration of every party. The Conservative itted that the question of Ireland was the question of they had professed a policy of their own. As declared and the Earl of Mayo, that policy was to establish ch public funds the Roman Catholic institutions as Presbyterian clergy in that country. He (Mr. d) leave them to judge how far this would be satisfaction of Ireland. Both sides admitting, therefore, and his party felt they had no alternative but to sures they had proposed. They did not lie in wait which the Conservative Government might wish then proceed to pick a hole in it; but they said cy of their own which they would bring forward, to do away with a system of Church establishment ally unsuited to the country, and which had proved ord and difficulty instead of a messenger of peace They would, indeed, be unworthy of the special e, the honoured name of politicians, were they now, the idle reproaches which had been hurled against and hang back in that career on which they There was another great question relating to would require a speedy settlement—namely, Irish land, and which would be dealt with of succession. He had noticed with great peling which had been shown during the recent ard to the Irish question. On all sides there was a expressed to assist the Government in essentially te of ecclesiastical arrangements in Ireland. The edly had shown a great attachment to their Church, it to think that they, with some few brilliant ex- this matter exercised their influence improperly; he was glad to feel that that influence had been conviction that they were doing their duty. They here might be foolish as well as wise men among asking generally, they were men of earnestness, and respect of the people by working hard in their it appeared to him that the Church of England ctly well content to take her chance among the coming times so long as her clergy strove to do r his part, he could look forward with cheerfulness

It was idle to suppose that a Church could be ministered only to a portion of the people. He idea that the Roman Catholics were seeking was idle to talk of this, and he was not going to such bugbears. Mr. Gladstone concluded amidst

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE.

Mr. Gladstone was re-elected at Birmingham without opposition, gentleman said when he was elected five weeks ago tention or intention of putting the constituency to considering its choice. He appeared before them which he had assumed with extreme reluctance. Mr. had been called to office by, doubtless, the willing een, and by the concurrence of the vast majority of a after he proceeded to the formation of his Admin- ked him to join the Government, and he had reason he made that proposition with the cordial and sence of her Majesty. He had very strong reasons change his place in the House of Commons; but were only personal; and, though he believed them the arguments which were used to induce him to tion, they were based upon what he considered best t of the great Liberal party and for the public e private and personal reasons he had for refusing o the public reasons which were so strongly consideration, and he had surrendered his incli- might say also his judgment, to the opinions f his friends. Mr. Gladstone had at first proposed

that he should accept the office of Secretary of State for India, and many of his friends had urged upon him the propriety of his assuming that post; he had been restrained, however, from accepting it partly because of physical inability to undertake its laborious duties, but chiefly because, holding the opinions which he had expressed twelve years ago, opinions which he still believed to be sound, as to the administration of Indian affairs, he felt that the opinion of the country was not sufficiently advanced to adopt his views, and if he had taken that office he should have found himself unable to carry into execution principles which he believed to be sound, and he should also have felt that he was in his wrong place. If he had connected himself distinctly with the direction of the great military departments of the Indian Government in the office which he had accepted, perhaps he might have done a little good, and perhaps he might have prevented some harm. He could assure his constituents that, though he now stood before them in a new character, he had not the smallest intention of getting rid of his old one. He appealed to them to give his conduct in office a lenient consideration, and if at any time his votes might appear in contradiction to votes he had given formerly, he asked them to judge by the results of the year's legislation, and ask whether, on such consideration, they could approve the conduct of the Government of which he had become a member. Mr. Bright then spoke at length on public questions. He declared that the disorder which prevailed at the recent general election and the intimidation which had been exercised in many boroughs and counties had confirmed the arguments in favour of the ballot, and made many eminent converts in its favour. He thought that public nominations might be dispensed with, and that it would be desirable to have all public houses closed on the days of polling. The question of education was one which no doubt Parliament would consider, and which no Government could altogether leave out of its catalogue of matters to be dealt with. He denounced in strong terms the gross and scandalous expenditure of the country, and said that no Government was deserving of the confidence and support of the people of this country which could not carry on the administration of its affairs in a manner consistent with the dignity and security of England on a smaller sum than seventy millions a year. It was the duty of the Government in the present Session of Parliament to settle finally, if it were possible, the great question of Ireland and the Irish Church, which was referred to the people at the recent general election, and it should not encumber itself with work it could not do. Mr. Bright concluded a speech which occupied nearly an hour in delivery by appealing to the people of Birmingham for their sympathy and support on behalf of the present Government.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.

The re-election of the Right Hon. Robert Lowe for the University of London was proposed by Mr. Julian Goldsmid and seconded by Mr. Quain. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in thanking the electors for the renewed proof of their confidence, said he presumed that nothing had occurred since he last met them to diminish the confidence they felt in the new Government. Of the Government itself he could say nothing, inasmuch as the Government was not fully formed; indeed, his own office was not fully filled, awaiting confirmation that evening. His was a post the holder of which made himself disagreeable to everybody; but he was prepared for all the observation and all the obloquy to which he might be exposed.

THE SECRETARY FOR WAR.

Mr. Cardwell was re-elected without opposition, on Tuesday, for the city of Oxford, on his acceptance of office as Secretary for War. The right hon. gentleman stated that, although it had been impossible for him to examine the various details of expenditure, the public would find that in the estimates for the ensuing year evidence of a substantial reduction would exist. At the same time, he warned his hearers that the object of retrenchment was not to be attained in a single year. Mr. Cardwell then spoke of the importance of doing justice to Ireland; and, with respect to the ballot, he wished to see freedom of election, preferring to think that in this free country every man could give his vote and fear not for the consequences.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY.

Mr. Childers, the First Lord of the Admiralty, devoted his speech to naval affairs and the Irish Church. He briefly alluded to the reforms which were necessary for the proper working of his department, and which he intended to carry out. On the great question of the day, on which the national verdict had just been taken, he expressed himself in favour of a just, moderate, and conciliatory policy.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE POOR-LAW BOARD.

Mr. Goschen, as the President of the Poor-Law Board, hoped and believed that great improvements, both legislative and administrative, were possible in the department over which he had been called upon to preside.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS.

Mr. Layard was re-elected without opposition for Southwark. In returning thanks he congratulated the electors that they had met under less exciting circumstances than on a recent occasion, and he trusted that if he had then said anything in the heat of the moment that was offensive he should be forgiven. He had accepted the office of Commissioner of Works on conscientious principles, believing that in doing so he had acted in unison with the views of the electors of Southwark. Believing that Mr. Gladstone had acted and always would act conscientiously, he felt bound to waive any private considerations. The present Ministry, Mr. Layard added, was the most democratic we had ever had, and the House of Commons was the most democratic also. He was proud to say that, years ago, he had advocated the claims of Mr. Bright to office, and now he was only too happy to see the right hon. gentleman was a member of the Government. He was certain that Mr. Gladstone would carry out the great principles he had already advocated, if allowed to do so by the Tories, who, no doubt, would throw every obstacle in his way. Of one thing he was certain—the expenditure of the War Office must be decreased, as well as that of some other departments. Reduction of taxation must be the great aim of a Liberal Government. With regard to another question (most important)—viz., the expenses of elections, he could assure his constituents that a measure would be introduced in Parliament respecting it. With respect to the Eastern question, he was decidedly in favour of non-intervention. Let Mohammedans and Christians settle their own differences.

In answer to a question, the right hon. gentleman said he could not say what was the intention of Mr. Gladstone with regard to the appropriation of the revenues of the Irish Church, except that they were not to be devoted to religious purposes.

THE LAW OFFICERS.

The law officers of the Crown were re-elected at Plymouth and Exeter respectively. The Attorney-General, in dealing with the Irish Church, took occasion to speak of Mr. Gladstone's majority as a compact as well as a large one; and pointed out that the magnitude of the issues involved would be sufficient to make this question occupy most of the Session. The Solicitor-General expressed a hope that the constituencies, in their anxiety to see the Irish Church controversy set at rest, would not lose sight of the importance of land tenure, the ballot, and the education of the people.

OTHER MINISTERS.

The other Ministers re-elected were Mr. Forster, the Vice-President of the Council, at Bradford; Mr. Stansfeld, the Third Lord of the Treasury, at Halifax; Lord John Hay, one of the Lords of the Admiralty, at Ripon; and Captain the Hon. J. C. Vivian, the new War Lord of the Treasury, at Truro.

AN EXTRAORDINARY INCIDENT is reported in connection with the journey of the Irish mail from London last Saturday. When near Mostyn, North Wales, a passenger was seen to stretch forth his hand and fire a pistol at the moment that an up train from Holyhead was passing, and it is believed that the shot was aimed at the driver and the stoker.

NEWS FOR TOWN AND COUNTRY.

THE organisation for the despatch and supply of daily newspapers is one of the marvels of social mechanics. Live where we will within the limits of the three kingdoms, or even beyond them, we have but to will that the news of the day shall reach us once in every twenty-four hours, and to go through the commercial preliminaries of paying or ordering, to secure that our newspaper shall arrive with as much regularity as each morning's sun. The machinery by which this end is secured, the adaptation of men and material to the one purpose of sending out the London newspapers; the means adopted to feed every town and hamlet in the United Kingdom with its daily meal of news; the ramifications of distribution, whereby solitary farms and distant parsonages are placed on a par, in point of regularity of intelligence, with populous cities; the nicety with which time and work are adjusted, and the precautions whereby failure is prevented, and a constantly increasing success assured—are what we propose to describe.

It is Saturday morning, a little after four o'clock, and we are at one of the head-quarters of newspaper distribution. One hundred and fifty thousand morning journals are sent out from here every day, and the processes of folding, sorting, and addressing are in full progress now. A large building like a gigantic bank, long counters and tables intersecting it, and galleries running round it to its roof; strong men and active youths all busy, some with the papers at the folding-tables, others with brown paper parcels like bales of calico, and others again rushing out laden to the red carts in waiting; monotonous cries of the various journals' titles, and ever and anon a stimulating or encouraging word from an active little man who acts as general—such was the scene. "The great thing," we are assured, is "to get the work done in time. From five to six is our greatest rush, and it's only by watching and care that we don't miss one or other of the early trains. These are nearly all about six a.m. There's one of the London and Chatham's goes at 5.50—that's the earliest of all; but the great bulk of the newspapers, even by that line, leave by a train at 6.15; and between six, which is the time of the London and Brighton, to 6.30, the South-Eastern's, and 6.35, Waterloo, the trains of all the great London lines go out. We've got a new plan now at the Great Western. They've given us a room on the platform, and we've eighteen men there who do all the folding, addressing, and checking you see going on for the other lines here now, close to the train. The papers are taken down direct from the various offices just as they leave the press, and don't come near this central department. Then the North-Western Company accommodates us in another way. On their line we have a special double carriage fitted up as a newspaper-room, and in this four of our men go down by the early train, and fold and distribute papers all over the North-Western Railway district. Their journey ends at Stafford, and they come back again every day by the 2 train. Our system is a very simple one. These large sheets of stout brown paper have printed labels, you'll observe, pasted on each side. One of these is the agent's or customer's address; the other is a list of the different newspapers we send out, with blanks for the number to be supplied. These are filled in the day before by clerks, who copy the particulars from the order-books; so that, as you see, when morning comes, and the brown covers are sorted into districts in this room, the packers have but to call out so many of the *Times*, or *Daily News*, and so many of the other journals in rotation, according to the list before them. The parcel is not tied up until its contents are counted by another man, so that there may be no mistake."

This statement is not given consecutively as written, but at intervals in the course of busy, omnipresent supervision. Two clocks are so placed that the foreman speaking has the dial-plate of one or other of them in sight wherever he stands, and the great struggle is to have the many bulky parcels tied up in time for the carts in waiting. The advertisement sheets of the *Times* are being folded down stairs—the main portion of that journal has not yet come in. This folding takes place down stairs, where a large department fitted up with steam-engines and folding-machines is as busy as the one whence we have descended. The apparatus only requires feeding, the broad damp sheet being placed on the top of what looks like a printing press, from which it is swept to a second, third, and fourth compartment below, each sweep giving it a fresh fold until it emerges at the bottom in the shape in which newspapers are sold over the counter or from the book-stall. There are nine of these steam-machines, each folding a thousand an hour, and all busily at work. It is but a small percentage of the newspapers sent out, however, which are folded here—the majority being sent out in bulk, and in the shape of linen bales. Every man and boy we see is busy; and one new machine, specially adapted for the extra (Christmas) supplements of weekly journals, is especially occupied just now. A hoarse rumble of wheels, a rude clatter of hasty footsteps overhead, a sound as of some massive dead weight falling upon wood, and a vague impression of extra bustle up stairs, tells our guide that the remaining portions of the leading journal have arrived. It is now 5.15, and the passing of each minute is watched jealously. The other newspapers arrive almost simultaneously. The organised turmoil increases apace. What seems to the uninitiated eye a chaos evolves order as if of its own accord, each human atom stooping, bending, hammering, sorting, tying up, and carrying off as if bent upon his own share of the business alone, and the efforts of all converging to the one great purpose of feeding the red carts. Two Post Office vans drive up, and are speedily filled with bales of printed matter for the early mails. "Hallo, Jenkins! (energetically), what's this?" applies to a young man in shirt sleeves and apron, who has paused for a moment to blow his nose. "Arf a minute, only, Sir. Tomkins is a fetchin' of 'em in," is given in reply, but penitentially, and extra energy is at once displayed, as if in condonation of the momentary break; for pausing means delay, and delay would be fatal to the entire scheme. If a hundred and thirty men and boys persisted in using their pocket-handkerchiefs twice between five a.m. and six a.m., one hundred and fifty thousand families would be kept behind the world for hours. So all work together with a will and without intermission till the last cart goes. The foreman is ubiquitous; now at the door, superintending the loading; now exchanging a hasty word with the bearded book-clerk, who sits in a glass sentry-box at the entrance to tick off the bales dispatched and enter them in his ledger; now hailing the staff on the first gallery, who are busy with the stamped copies; now casting a rapid eye upon the workers, and now again admonishing all present of the fleeting time. Although the extreme strain is, as we have said, from five to six a.m., the working morning hours are from 4.45 a.m. till eight, the Irish and foreign mails claiming attention after the first trains have left. So far, we have noticed chiefly the large parcels. But besides these brown-paper monsters are snug, circular packets, like large Catherine-wheels or bundles of squibs, which follow in the wake of their big brethren, to be, like them, borne off to the four points of the compass by cart and train. These are the single copies for such people as live near some station which is too small and insignificant to support a bookstall. Each squib is a newspaper folded as if for post, and with an address which is set up and printed fresh each day. These are left simply at the stations, and are arranged for privately by their consignees. Certain railways—such as the Great Western, the Great Northern, the Midland, and the North-Western—issue halfpenny stamps for these, which frank them to their destination on the line. On others—such as the London, Chatham, and Dover; the South-Eastern, the South-Western, the Great Eastern, and the London and Brighton—they are carried with the larger parcels at the "lumped" price per cwt. as goods. No dwelling is too insignificant and no district too remote to be reached by the agencies we see; and to behold the dumb sheets first beaten, patted, and coerced into bulky masses, and then thrown heavily into the vehicles and hurried off, and to then reflect upon all which this mechanical process implied, was as if some wizard had lifted the veil and shown us the pulsation of the great world's heart. The tidings of joy and grief, the news conveying prosperity to one family and ruin to another, the fate of empires and the condition of nations, the state

of the weather at the Orkney Islands, the price of shares on the Stock Exchange, the number of times the Queen walked on the Windsor slopes, the "form" of the racing favourite of the hour, the intentions of the Ministry, the latest squabble between parish guardians, the last murder, the most recent effort of public benevolence, crime, theology, politics, science—are all packed up and sent forth on their mission. The single word "news" comprises these, and early morning at a great newsagent's has a poetry in its very prose.—*Daily News*.

NEW PLAN OF DEFENCES ON THE SCHELDT.

WE have not yet reached the end of those inventions which it was once supposed would put an end to war by making it too terrible for humanity to contemplate; and the latest adaptation of science to instruments of destruction has been exemplified on the Scheldt, that sluggish river, once the very synonym for peaceful calm and untroubled repose; where nothing but a slow fishing-boat, an occasional barge, or a few ponderous, sleepy-headed cattle disturbed the quiet of the scene. From its rise in the small lake in the hills of Ardennes to Cambrai, where it becomes navigable, and so on to the point where it enters Belgium, and afterwards on its whole course, past Tournai, Hainaut, West Flanders, Antwerp, and so on to Flushing, there is nothing to suggest excitement, or, rather, there was nothing until the Belgian artillery officers, under General Chazal, ex-Minister of War, commenced their operations. It would be impossible here to give a complete description in detail of the extraordinary apparatus that is destined to make the river at once impassable to an enemy's ships. Suffice it to say that in a dark chamber, on the principle of the camera obscura, is a table on which a perfect plan of that portion of the river necessary to be defended is placed. On this plan, which is made to an exact scale, the approach of any vessel along the stream is immediately reflected; and at certain distances on the plan itself are set small knobs or buttons, which represent the torpedoes sunk in the stream. While one person is intently watching this picture, another is waiting to apply the electric current to a battery the reservoirs of which are numbered to correspond with the buttons on the plan, and are connected with the torpedoes on the various lines of defence. In this way it is believed that an enemy's vessel may be exploded at the moment it reaches the spot indicated on the plan, while the operation may be carried on as successfully from a great height as from the low banks of the Scheldt.

THE LESURQUES TRIAL IN FRANCE.

READERS of French newspapers for the last seventy years are familiar with the "Affaire Lesurques;" and, if any historical proposition might be thought demonstrated, it is that the unfortunate individual bearing that name was the victim of a judicial error. He was tried, condemned, and guillotined, as having been one of five highwaymen who robbed the Lyons mail at Montgeron, in the forest of Bondy, a few leagues from Paris. A year later the real man, for whom he was mistaken, a notorious robber named Duboscq, was convicted and executed at Versailles, the witnesses who deposed against him admitting that they were mistaken when they accused Lesurques. A great and undeniable fact is, that six heads were cut off for a crime committed but by five persons. Lesurques was a respectable and wealthy bourgeois of Paris. That he should have suddenly turned highwayman, and consorted with men in a totally different rank of life from himself, was against all reasonable probability, and there was no suggestion that he had any occasion to be anywhere in the neighbourhood of the place where the crime was committed. He was one of a crowd of curious spectators; hanging about the police office in Paris when four of the robbers were brought up for examination, and one of the witnesses pointed him out and swore that he was a fifth. A more extraordinary case of mistaken identity was never heard of. Lesurques was within a few months of the same age as Duboscq, and had about him almost identical marks and scars. In an early stage of the cause the presiding judge was prejudiced against him by the fact of his having, to save some small fees, made use of a passport belonging to his brother. The very next day after his conviction a country *juge de paix* wrote to Paris that he knew Lesurques was innocent. At that time the executive power did not possess the prerogative of pardon, and the Council of Five Hundred, to whom the matter was referred, shrank from the responsibility of interfering with a judicial verdict. The innocent man went to execution. There is a well-known picture of his family taking leave of him. In that picture may be seen a little girl of seven or eight years old tenderly embracing her father. That girl was Mdlle. Virginie Lesurques. She is yet alive. is now an old maid of eighty, who has never since her father's death ceased to wear deep mourning, and who throughout her long life has had but one object, that of clearing her father's memory from the stain of crime. Owing to her exertions and that of many friends of the family, including Viscount Clary, the "Affaire Lesurques" has been from time to time brought before the Legislatures of the Restoration, the Government of July, the Republic of 1848, and the Second Empire; on every occasion the matter was hotly argued, and the real innocence of Lesurques never questioned. But the professional prejudice of the law officers always prevented a rehabilitation. It was often said, almost facetiously, that if Lesurques had been unjustly condemned it was a *petit malheur* for him; but that to proclaim the injustice of this condemnation would do him no good, and would have the inconvenience of shaking public confidence in the administration of justice. The absurd French notion to which Judges and Procureurs superstitiously cling, that a court of law is infallible, was at the bottom of all this. Only a year ago no desperate cause, of the very name of which the public was sick and tired, seemed so hopeless as that of the Lesurques family. But last Session the conscience of the Corps Legislatif was suddenly troubled about the matter, and it actually threatened to stop the supplies (as to one section of the Budget) unless an Act on the statute-book preventing rehabilitation, on the ground of two incompatible judgments after the death of both parties interested, were repealed. The Minister gave way, and, in pursuance of a new law, Mdlle. Virginie Lesurques demanded from the Court of Cassation a reversal, on the merits, of the sentence of death executed seventy years ago upon her father. The arguments occupied several days. It was not doubted by the public that when the technical objections which stood in the way were so unexpectedly removed, the innocence of Lesurques would be judicially declared. But now M. Delangle, the Procureur-General of the Court of Cassation, and beyond all question one of the greatest lawyers in France, recommended the Court to reject the demand for a reversal of the judgment, and declared his opinion that there is no incompatibility between the condemnation of Lesurques and Duboscq, and no evidence that Lesurques was not guilty. To the immense disappointment of the public, the Court of Cassation has taken this view of the case and has rejected the appeal of Mdlle. Lesurques, on the plea that the two sentences passed on Lesurques and Duboscq were not legally incompatible, therefore there were no grounds to examine the question of Lesurques's innocence. The judges have virtually refused to admit the possible fallibility of a sentence, and therefore proclaim French law courts infallible. If Lesurques were guilty, why was Duboscq executed, and vice versa? There is a widespread feeling of sympathy expressed in Paris for the aged daughter of the unjustly-executed Lesurques, whose whole life has been devoted to the noble cause of proving her father's innocence, in which she has undoubtedly succeeded, although the courts of law will not admit the error they committed in 1804.

READING-ROOM AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY.—The acquisition of Sir Charles Eastlake's art-library, said to be one of the finest in existence, recently purchased by the National Gallery, and the removal of the library of the Royal Academy to Burlington House, have induced the trustees to form a collection embracing every attainable work relating to the fine arts, and to establish a library of reference and reading-room for the use of students, and accessible for the public under certain regulations.



THE DEFENCES OF THE SHELDT.



THE DEFENDERS OF THE SHELDT.



THE LESBROQUES TRIAL IN PARIS: M. DELAVALLE ADDRESSING THE COURT.

I do not believe in the premature disclosure and when I saw that paragraph in the *Manc* announcing that Lord Mayo was to be recalled, a of Salisbury was, in a year, to be Governor decided at once that it was a canard. Indeed, would have believed it. The thing itself is v It is most unlikely that the Government co- cided anything upon the subject; and, if it had, imp-obable that its decision could have oozed I have no doubt, like almost all political conjecture. There has been a gathering of House. The eyes of all our political quidnits wonderingly upon that meeting. "What can



THE FRENCH COURT AT COMPIEGNE: THE EMPRESS AND HER GUESTS IN TH



EMPEROR AND EMPRESS AT COMPIEGNE: THE EMPRESS AND HER GUESTS IN THE FAMILY SALOON.

I.

II.

III.

IV.

V.

VI.

VII

VIII.

IX.

X

plained to the Monarch, although he had taken an oath that the Princess Royal should never marry while the Ledger remained

visiting Edinburgh, and wishing to see this relic, we will show it to you, or to any other person who may feel interested in it. In name of our relations, I am, Sir, your most
THOMAS SELCRAIG, 2, Glenorchy-place, Greenside-row,

Professor De Organ was much annoyed when he had given his consent, because, as he explained, although he had taken an oath that that he would never marry while the Ledger remained

In conclusion, we beg to state that, if you or any of your officers were ever visiting Edinburgh, and wishing to see this relic, we would feel proud in showing it to you, or to any other person who may feel interested in seeing it. In name of our relations, I am, Sir, your most obedient servant.

Of her sympathy with the life around her, the pieces entitled "Mary Lee," "Sheepieknowe," "A Lay of the Loch and the Muirland," "Mary Muiren," "The Monkland Cottar," "Grannie Tale," and "Grannie's Crack About the Famine in 1739-40" are excellent specimens; but we cannot dwell longer on a volume that has given us much pleasure in the perusal, and must bid this useful, wise, kind, and good old lady farewell, with the hope that her remaining days may be pleasant, and the assurance of our belief that when Scotland reckons up her poets the name of Jane Hamilton will not be forgotten.

Once again Miss Worboise brings a volume to add to the numerous tales (which we would call novels, but that they are supposed to be addressed to a seriously-disposed public) that she has written. Perhaps the authoress is right in making a little distinction between her stories and the books that are so frequently taken to represent the novel-writing, and especially the ladies' novel-writing, of the period. In "Cyril Denham" there is nothing that may not be introduced to the family circle without fear; and, at the same time, there is as much interest as will serve to secure the attention of the reader.

THE LATE M. BERRYER.

WE have already published a memoir of this distinguished Frenchman, as well as descriptions of his funeral and of his chateau at Augerville, and need say no more as to the Engraving we this week place before our readers than that it represents the scene when the coffin containing M. Berryer's remains was placed in the entrance to the family vault in the chapel of the villa at Augerville—a scene which was witnessed with the most profound regret and sympathy by all present.

SOMDETH-CHUFA-CHULALONGKORN, KING OF SIAM.

SOME time ago we gave an account of the Government of Siam and of the ceremonies observed at the funeral of one of the Royal family as well as of those of the Court. We have now to record the death of the King and the succession of his eldest son to the throne. The late King Pra-Bart-Somdetch-Phra-Chom-Klow, was in many respects a very remarkable man. He added to a considerable acquaintance with scientific subjects the knowledge of two or three languages, could write Latin and English with ease, and was conversant with every dialect of the Indo-Chinese from Sanskrit to Thai. He was also a famous optician, and possessed in his palace at Bangkok a very extraordinary collection of instruments illustrating that science. Indeed it may be said that his taste for astronomy led to his death, for a commission from France having set out to observe the eclipse of the sun at Saigon, on Aug. 18 last, his Majesty made a journey to that place in order to be present on the occasion; and after assisting in the observations, returned home, where he was seized with the fever and dysentery from the effects of which he died on Oct. 1, at the age of sixty-four. The late King was distinguished for the truly regal gift of inspiring his subjects with respect and affection, and of attracting foreign visitors to his court, where his great abilities and amiable manners secured their regard. As soon as his death was known the members of the Council met and determined that, according to the laws of the country, as he had not named a successor, the crown should be assumed by his eldest son, who was himself, however, suffering from a similar illness to that which had been fatal to his father. The coronation ceremonies have, therefore, been postponed until his health is sufficiently restored for him to take part in them. The new King is not more than five and the Government will consequently be a Regency, the principal person of the State being Sri-Sury-Wongse, Prime Minister and Minister of present sixty years old, and unites great experience and ordinary ability.

TRIAL OF ENGLISH AND PRUSSIAN ARTILLERY AT BERLIN.

THE trial of the celebrated Krupp gun against the Prussian marine service, against the English gun at Woolwich, has just been concluded on the artificial ground near Berlin, and the Prussians claim an advantage in favour of the enormous and costly piece of which all the world heard at the French Exhibition. As far as we can learn at present, there can be no doubt that Krupp showed decided advantage, since the shell penetrated an eight-inch iron-plated target, while

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THE trial of the celebrated Krupp gun constructed for the Prussian marine service, against the English guns sent from Woolwich, has just been concluded on the artillery practising-ground near Berlin, and the Prussians claim a most decided advantage in favour of the enormous and costly piece of ordnance of which all the world heard at the French Exhibition last year. As far as we can learn at present, there can be no doubt that the Krupp showed to decided advantage, since the shots fired from it penetrated an eight-inch iron-plated target, while the English gun



THE NEW KING OF SIAM.

only succeeded in going to the depth of seven inches, and then opened for a length of eighteen inches, so becoming ineffectual after firing 264 shots, while the Prussians fired 500 shots, and their gun remained uninjured. Our Engraving represents the scene on the Artillery Platz at the time of the contest.

DEATH OF A PUBLIC BENEFACCTOR.

ANOTHER benefactor, in the person of Mr. John Bairstow, of Preston, has just died, at the ripe old age of ninety years. The history of his life is a most remarkable one, showing perseverance and industry; for, unaided by wealth, he gained for himself a high social position and a princely fortune, which with a bounteous hand he distributed unsparingly to purposes of public utility. There is scarcely a society possessing national claims that has not received aid from his hands; and locally the poor have lost, without exception, in Mr. Bairstow their best friend. He was born in Halifax, Yorkshire; was the son of a poor woolstapler, who gave

his son the best education his means permitted. At the age of sixteen he was sent to Preston to learn the cotton manufacturing business at the well-known firm of Messrs. Horrocks, Miller, and Co., of which Mr. E. Hermon, M.P., is at present the head. Mr. Bairstow early showed good business qualities, and in the days of the old stage coaches, on fixed days, he visited the market towns of Lancashire as chief salesman of the firm, of which he ultimately became a member. It was always the boast of the deceased and his servants that his house was maintained by a sum that was wasted by most people, and his personal domestic expense was little over £200 a year at the period of his greatest affluence. This characteristic may be taken as one of the secrets of his attaining his immense wealth; but, having acquired such vast means, he gave liberally, and his generosity may be said to have been unbounded. He was a contributor to every worthy object in his own town, and many powerful organisations in the centres of industry have been assisted in a substantial way by him. His chief objects of assistance were churches, schools, and societies for disseminating Christian truth. There is not a church in the town to which he has not been a large contributor, and he used to consider the sacred edifices particularly under his charge, and that it was his duty to supply any deficiency found within them. The deceased was never married, and although he was one of ten children he has not a blood relation left. By his will he has bequeathed his large fortune to charitable objects and personal friends. Throughout his life his habits were scrupulously exact, and when an active partner in the manufacturing concern he was never absent from the mill at six o'clock in the morning, and whilst he was able to walk about he did so before breakfast. To this he attributed his good health and long life. Among his numerous bequests are the following:—Preston and County of Lancaster Royal Infirmary, £20,000; Church Missionary Society, £3000; Bible Society, £3000; Moravian Missions, £2000; Religious Tract Society, £1000; Pastoral Aid Society, £8000; Curates' Aid Society, £2000; Irish Church Mission Society, £500; Christian Knowledge Society, £3000; National Society for Promoting Religion among the Populations, £2000; Deaf and Dumb Institution, Manchester, £500; Naval and Military Bible Society, £500; Manchester Diocesan Church Building Society, £8000; Chester and Manchester Diocesan Board of Education, £1000; Casterton School for the Education of Daughters of the Clergy, £1000; Medical and Benevolent College, London, £200; Kendal Clerical Charity, £200. To the governors of Queen Anne's Bounty, to be applied to the endowment of the after-mentioned churches in Preston he bequeathed the following sums:—All Saints, £2000; Christ Church, £1000; St. Luke's, £6000; St. Mark's (for the completion of the tower), £1000; and St. Saviour's, £1000. To the Northern Counties Asylum for Idiots, at Lancaster, he leaves £5000. Besides personal bequests, he has not forgotten the Preston Mechanics' Institution, Preston Temperance Society, Preston Orphan School, Preston Institute for the Blind, Bible Woman's Mission, Samaritan Society, the Associated Institution (London) for making grants to provide houses and board for people reduced in circumstances, Society for the conversion of the Jews, Army Scripture-Readers' Society, National Society for the Propagation of Church Principles, Priests' Protection Society, Colonial and Continental Church Building Society, Missions to Seamen, &c.

EXPERIMENTS WITH THE NEW PRUSSIAN MARINE GUN AT BERLIN.



THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE M. BERRYER: PLACING THE COFFIN IN THE FAMILY VAULT AT AUGERVILLE.

FINE ARTS.

INSTITUTE OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS.

The present, which is the third, winter exhibition of this society contains some admirable pictures; and though the collection is, perhaps, rather deficient in "figure-subjects," the landscapes, as well as some of the sea pieces, are so admirable as to compensate for the want of what are generally the more popular and attractive elements of a winter gallery. To begin at the beginning, however, the "Jew's Harp" (3) of Mr. C. Green is a charming little figure-subject, and leads the visitor at once to two other remarkable pictures—Mr. W. Thomas's "Spring Time," with its abundant beauty of white blossom, and Mr. Absolon's "Bo-Peep," just such a picture as we should like to hang on the wall of our every-day family room. For a dining-hall, or an antique library, Mr. Edwin Hargitt's "Red Deer" would be more suitable, with its fine rendering of the purply, murky sky and the wildness of the group of antlered beauties.

To go on to the sea-pieces, Mr. Mogford's "Sea Mist Clearing Off the Cornish Coast" (16) is a superb water effect—the light vapoury cloud, the swelling ripple, the grand roll of the surf, all are wonderfully liquid; and that is no small praise when it is considered how few we have except solid seas. The dismasted vessel running up Channel, by Mr. Edwin Hayes (17), is also a charming bit of sky and sea in harmonious colour, and the droop of the sea birds is marvellously suggestive of the lull after the violence of the storm. Mr. G. Philp, in his "Sennen, Cornwall," has caught the true characteristics of the grand western coast, which seems to have been more than usually attractive this year. Mr. Mogford gives us Mont St. Michel after a storm (49), with a fine effect of that "clear-up" sky so beautiful to see, so hard to paint; and his "Embayed on the Cornish Coast" (29) leaves very little to be desired.

Mr. H. G. Hive's "Stone-Boat," Swanage, Dorset (107), is a lovely bit of soft colour; and Mr. Philp's "Heavy Gale on the Lizard Coast" (115) is full of spirit, and is, to our thinking, his best work in the exhibition. In his Falmouth Bay (57) the water is too papery, by which we mean that the waves look like curled paper; and the same fault is, we think, to be detected in his "Wreck at Gower" (193) and his "Brig on Shore" (273). His "Silvery Sunshine, Mount's Bay" (358), is a charming picture. In other kinds of scenery there is so much variety that our limits will not admit of more than casual mention of a few prominent pictures. "Near Bellagio, Lake Como" (20), by Mr. Philip Mitchell, is full of promise; and Mr. Deane's "Weggen, Lake of Lucerne," is distinguished by its mellow tone, but, as we cannot help thinking, at a little sacrifice of the texture, which is strangely woolly when seen only at a short distance.

Mr. Skinner Proust's charming picture, "Sweet are the Little Brooks that Run" (21), is a happy illustration of its subject; and Mr. Richardson's "Kilchurn Castle" (32), is real, and finely rendered. Mr. Aaron Penley has given us in his "Loch Lomond" (34) one of those lovely effects of rosy light that require the most delicate touch and just appreciation. This picture, perhaps, spoils us for Mr. Charles Vacher's light yellow sky in his "Torno, Lake Como" (38), and gives an unpleasant effect to a picture that is in other respects attractive.

A charming little bit is Mr. Hine's "Kyles of Bute—Early Morning" (42); and Mr. Edmund Warren's "Avenue at Wootton" (44), with its glorious path of ruddy and golden leaves beneath the stately trees through which the light glints in gorgeous flecks of colour, is too charming to be mentioned in a line.

Mr. James Fahey's "Giant's Causeway" (55) is an admirable memento of a scene not yet sufficiently appreciated by tourists; and Mr. Hine's "On the Thames—near Gravesend" (58), is just one of those charming pictures which shame us by teaching us how often we overlook the exquisite beauty of familiar scenes and ordinary places, and go far afield to look for loveliness that the artist can find close at home. Mr. Leitch's "Ben Chulich" (66) is a finely-executed and well-finished picture, and leads us to Mr. Harry Johnson's wild winter scene on the Alps, at the Hospice of the Great St. Bernard (98); and Mr. W. W. Deane's soft and beautiful "Lake of Lucerne, from Hapsburg" (108).

Mr. Beavis has sent a fine picture, called "The Wheat Harvest, North of France" (112), full of admirable colour and capital handling, which contrasts well with Mr. James Fahey's fine clear, cold colouring in his "Seawell" (123).

"On the Thames, near Shipkake," by Mr. J. W. Whympier, is a pretty, quiet picture, admirable in tone and drawing; and Mr. George Shalders's "Quiet Corner" (26) is capital in its wonderful study of lazy sheep. Mr. Edward Hargitt sends a fine picture of Kinnoul Hill, Perth; and Mr. Whympier exceeds himself in the dramatic suggestiveness of the solitary "Home of the Charcoal-burner" in wild forest depths (177). Mr. Laporte's "Young Scots and a Shorthorned Bull" is admirable. The cattle are full of fierce young life. "Wast Water" (199) is another example of Mr. Aaron Penley's best manner, as is his lovely picture "Windermere." Mr. Hargitt has exhibited his remarkable power in the cattle of his "Highland Drove" (242), and the scene that is placed close to it, "On the Tay" (250), one of the most attractive pictures in the exhibition.

We have left ourselves little space for other subjects in the present notice; but Mr. John Absolon's "Tambourine" attracts attention as soon as we enter the room. Mr. R. Beavis's "Sturdy of Horses" (41) is a remarkable picture; and Mr. Charles Cattermole, in "Washing the Pilgrim's Feet" (60), displays that admirable finish that is his great characteristic. Mr. Andrew Gow's "In Church" (67) is just the kind of picture to be popular; the figures of the old woman and the child are capital; and the whole scene, the high pew, the cold bare look of the place, and the disposition of light are admirable. Mr. McKewan, in his pictures of the interiors of the rooms at Knowle, has given us some carefully-finished and attractive pieces, that of the Venetian bed-room (84) being remarkable for the rendering of the texture of the old hangings and the subdued richness of colour. We must notice Mrs. Duffield's, "Azalea and Jonquil" (114), a lovely little bit of nature, before we are absorbed by that most gliding piece of art, Mr. Corbould's "Fall of James III. of Scotland" (116). It is a spirited picture, and succeeds in that most difficult undertaking, making a foreshortened, recumbent man in armour look as though he were really a live man, and not a mere lay figure; but the composition is unpleasant; the subject seems to have carried with it a certain awkwardness in disposing the figure of man and horse, and the whole work is strangely varnishy in surface and raw in colour.

A very pretty little picture is Mr. Sherrin's "Catching the Moth" (132), but the trial of rendering the light of a candle in a limited space is an old one and not ended with the interest that attaches to originality. Mr. Green's "Cavalier" (134) is evidently only a cavalier of the green-room or the fancy-dress ball. Mr. Weigall knows how to paint a donkey if anybody does, as may be seen by 136; but he also knows how to paint a charming grisette tripping along from market at early morning—fresh puce dress, green umbrella, coquettish cap, frank smile, and French politeness *au naturel*, as is evident by his capital picture "Bon jour, Monsieur!" (142).

Mr. Corbould's sketch, entitled "Life and Death" (174), representing the ladies of the Court of Rufus passing the body of the dead King lying in the wood as they return from the hunt, is full of suggestion and admirably executed; and his picture "On the Way Home" (188)—a rather romantic village girl not sufficiently dressed, or, at all events, in want of strings or hooks-and-eyes, sitting on a bank to read—is evidently the work of a masterly hand, but seems to be wanting in some element which in a more worldly occupation than that of art would perhaps be called "tact."

Mr. Campion has sent two pictures, one of which is called "Shrimpers" (216) and the other (a companion picture) "High and Dry" (222). They are both creditable performances; but we can hardly help inquiring why the shrimper in the first, and the individual who is being landed high and dry on a study fisherman's shoulders in the second, should both be attempted portraits of the President of the Board of Trade? We had heard that the member for

Birmingham was noted as a salmon-fisher, but had no idea that he united to that sport the less romantic pastime of catching shrimps.

With Mr. Lucas's "Adam's Ale" (230), a capital little picture representing a drinking-fountain, and his "Stray Kitten" (252), both of them destined, we should think, to be reproduced and made popular by chromolithography or some other process, we must close our notice of a very interesting exhibition.

CONSUMPTION OF WHEAT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

AN elaborate collection of returns relative to our home growth of wheat, together with the annual import and the estimated consumption throughout the United Kingdom, has been issued by Mr. J. B. Lawes and Dr. J. H. Gilbert. The object of the compilation is to show the progress or decline of our agricultural industry in this particular department within a recent date; and a comparison is therefore made between two periods of eight years each, beginning with 1812. The authors explain the nature of the data at command in relation to the area under wheat; the average yield per acre; the aggregate home produce and the amount available for consumption; the quantities imported; the number of consumers and the probable amount required per head, in each main division of the United Kingdom and in the whole collectively. Taking these data, which are admitted to be in some respects defective, and, except in the case of Ireland, unofficial, it is found that, comparing the last eight with the preceding eight years, there has been a diminution of area under wheat in the United Kingdom during the later period of between 8 and 9 per cent, an increase in yield per acre of about 1½ per cent, and a decrease in the total wheat supplied from home produce of nearly 7 per cent. There is, on the other hand, an increase in the foreign supplies of about 74 per cent. A further result shown is an increase in the aggregate amount of wheat consumed in the United Kingdom of between 14 and 15 per cent, with a growth of population of only about 5½ per cent. The main conclusions drawn from the inquiry, and from a comparison of the two periods of eight years each are as follow:—There has been a reduction in the area under wheat in each of the main divisions of the United Kingdom—large in Scotland and Ireland, but only small in England and Wales. There has been a small increase in the yield per acre in England and probably in Scotland, but a marked diminution in Ireland. The imports have swollen enormously of late years, and in a much greater proportion in Ireland than in Great Britain. The aggregate amount of wheat consumed annually has augmented very considerably, and the ratio of increase would appear to be much the same in Great Britain and in Ireland. The actual consumption of wheat per head shows an increase of more than 20 per cent in Ireland, but little more than 5 per cent in Great Britain. Taking the average of the last eight years, the figures indicate the annual consumption of wheat per head to have been about 6½ bushels in England, scarcely 4½ in Scotland, and only about 3½ in Ireland, or, for the whole of the United Kingdom, about 5½ bushels. Estimating the present population of the United Kingdom at about 30,800,000, the above consumption would give a present requirement of 21,175,000 quarters; while, allowing for the growth of population, it is calculated that, unless the home produce available as food (about 12,250,000 quarters per annum over the last eight years) should increase, there will be required over the next five years an average importation of between 9,000,000 and 10,000,000 quarters annually. It may be pointed out, however, as explaining the very large increase in the import of wheat, that the second and later period of eight years included three bad harvests in succession, and a consequent necessity for unusual foreign supplies, which may not speedily recur.

DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT OF ENGLISH NOBLEMEN.—The Paris *Figaro* recounts a story not creditable to the British Peerage. A few nights ago his Grace the Duke of Hamilton, his brother, some friends, and their servants, all drunk, rode on horseback along the Rue Lafayette. Some of the party stopped a carriage, exclaiming, "Make way for the Duke of Hamilton!" The French possessor of the carriage expressed himself in terms emphatically devoid of reverence for the Duke of Hamilton, and demanded free passage on the causeway. Thereupon, the *Figaro* says, his Grace administered a blow with a life-preserver to the gentleman in the carriage, and a regular fray ensued. Some policemen, who acted with great forbearance, induced the English party to take refuge in the Maison Dorée, from one of the balconies of which they were seen up to the small hours, with several ladies wearing enormous chignons. The owner of the carriage, who has a broken head, will bring the matter before the Tribunal of Correctional Police.

MR. MILL AND THE WESTMINSTER ELECTION.—Mr. John Stuart Mill has broken silence about the election at Westminster in a letter to M. Esquiros, published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Mr. Mill believes that the principal causes of his defeat are three—1. The great superiority of organisation among his opponents—acting as they were under a business man, working for his own interests. 2. Their abundance of money. 3. The hostility of nearly all the vestrymen and local notabilities, who were scared by the propositions for municipal reform. Setting aside the check sustained in his person by the advanced Liberal party, for himself Mr. Mill has nothing to regret. He hopes to exercise as great, and a far more congenial, activity in favour of his opinions as a writer than as a member of Parliament. The check sustained by the Radical party is far more difficult to explain. Some people think it was merely an affair of money, and it is certain that money was employed for corruption on a deplorable scale. (A million was withdrawn from the Bank the week before the elections.) Then that social influence which is very powerful in this country was made the most of by the other side. But the chief things, and that which explains the great importance of money in our elections, is the slowness of the British intelligence, which needs to be stirred in every possible manner before it can persuade itself to move. Another cause is to be found in the defective organisation of the working men. However, we may rejoice that, in a struggle with money, like that at the recent elections, they have not found enough of money and material interests ready to range themselves on the side of reason and justice to assure victory to Mr. Gladstone and the abolition of the privileges of the Irish Church.

THE CRYSTAL PALACE PANTOMIME.—Few ordinary theatres ever compete with the scenic beauty of the Crystal Palace pantomime, and no theatre that has ever yet been constructed can pretend to vie with the numbers of the audience which it draws. A good Christmas pantomime at Norwood means an attendance of some 20,000 or 30,000 people, or, in other words, the adult population of some large towns, and rather more than double the population of some so-called English cities, such as Wells or Salisbury. Of course, with such an audience to please, the Crystal Palace pantomimes are always ranked first among the holiday festivities of the year; and, in order to be ranked, at least in time, first of all, the Crystal Palace pantomime began on Monday. The title, which is the "Little Boy Blue," with ever so many other titles, has, of course, no more connection with what is afterwards to follow than it was called "Female Suffrage," or the "Wick District of Burghs." Of plot before the harlequinade there is absolutely none, and of dialogue there is next to none, and of fun there is very little. Most of the opening is made up of songs and dances, and, unfortunately, most of the songs have been entrusted to those who, either individually or collectively, are least capable of rendering them with justice. We have said this much of the opening, we have said the worst; for the scenes and scenery are beautiful, and the music which accompanies all the dances is excellent. The transformation scene is a positive attraction in itself. It is not over displayed before. It was greeted on Monday, as it well deserves to be, with a perfect enthusiasm of applause. If the pantomime only contained this scene it would be of itself well worth seeing. Certainly nothing like it for beauty of colour or grouping of figures has been seen for a long time on any English stage. Of the harlequinade which follows on somebody being transformed to someone else it is difficult to speak too highly. There is a most admirable Clown, Pantaloon, and Harlequin, and two graceful and skilful Columines. The transformation scenes after this are very good, and the "business" bustle of a pantomime is kept up from first to last amid roars of laughter. There was, of course, the traditional red-hot poker of all Christmas pieces, of which the Clown made the most in the most humorous manner, and the curtain fell on a beautiful scene amid great applause. The pantomime needs much curtailment of its opening portion, but nothing of the harlequinade should be omitted. With the exception, there is every reason to believe that the Crystal Palace pantomime will be one of the most popular of the present season, and we are certain that it will be seen by more holiday-makers than any half-dozen other pantomimes in London. There are many other attractions besides this to draw are seen in their full glories on Boxing Day. On that day, however, we may say emphatically, the Crystal Palace will be better worth a long day's visit than any other place of amusement near London.

TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE IN AMERICA.

ON the night of Dec. 5 the mail-steamer United States was on her way from Cincinnati to Louisville, with all the force of the stream in her favour, and a gay company of passengers on board. A wedding-party had joined them earlier in the evening, and the passengers had serenaded the happy couple, who were going westward for their honeymoon, and the noise of merriment rose so high that there were no sleepers on board, and the captain had retired to rest. Steaming against the stream was the steamer America on her way to Cincinnati, with a still larger company on board, many of whom were quietly sleeping in their berths. All went well till nearly midnight, when suddenly the crew of each steamer became aware that they were bearing down upon each other; and before there was time to alter the tack of either a collision had occurred, a fearful explosion followed it, and in an instant the United States was sinking in a sea of fire, and the America was drifting helplessly to the opposite bank. The scene which followed united the horrors of a railway collision and a shipwreck. In the fore part of the United States a cargo of petroleum occupied the deck, the collision burst the barrels and sent the fiery liquid streaming over the deck and down the sides of the vessel to the surface of the water, and when the engine-fires ignited it a sheet of flame flashed over the whole ship and over the surface of the water, so that in an instant the river itself was on fire all round the vessel. One passenger says that for two hundred yards the fire played over the surface of the stream, and battling with both the elements might be seen men and women struggling towards the shore. How any escaped seems marvellous. Some, however, came through the ordeal with their lives, but many were swept down the stream, never to be heard of again, and others were found so disfigured by fire that their individuality is lost, and their names will never be identified. On board the other vessel the misfortune was not so great. Set fire to by the petroleum, she drifted to the opposite shore, and many of her passengers escaped. But the suddenness of the calamity and the terrors of the situation paralysed many. One man, occupying a cabin in the America, took no notice of appeals to escape, and perished with help at hand. Other persons suffered the same entire paralysis of will, and were burned like unresisting victims. One person seemed entirely to forget the danger, and hardly noticed the approach of death till it actually seized him; an actress had to be carried away from the vessel by main force, and has since said that it was not till she was safe on shore that she could sufficiently collect her thoughts to realise the danger through which she had passed. The hairbreadth and almost miraculous escapes of others make a story too long to tell. In the end it is believed some seventy or eighty lives were lost, and both the steamers were wrecked and burned. The captain of the America, and most of the persons who were cool enough to observe the scene say that the magnitude of the calamity is due to the fire; but for it all the passengers would have been saved. Probably, too, it was the dreadful combination of peril by fire and by water, as well as the frightful suddenness of the calamity, which paralysed the will and confused the perceptions of so many of the passengers, and prevented the very instinct of self-preservation from acting. That such calamities are possible is simply due to the reckless mixing of explosive freights with living cargoes, and is a disgrace to the humanity of our age.

A DESTRUCTIVE STORM swept over the north of Scotland on Monday night. The whole of the seaward staging and the stonework executed in the Wick new harbour during the year was carried away.

A NEW YORK SHOP.—On Nov. 30 the latest addition to Stewart's retail dry-goods store, Broadway, New York, was opened to the public. This establishment, which claims to be the largest in the world, now covers two acres. The building is six stories high, and has a basement and sub-basement below ground; the steam-boilers to raise the elevators are under the side walk. The basement is used for the sale of oilcloths. The first story is the sale-room for nearly every kind of dry and fancy goods, except carpets, cloaks, shawls, and millinery. From the centre of this story rises, to the height of 100 ft., the great dome, topped by a flag-skyline. It leaves a space 60 ft. in length in the middle of the remaining floors. Each of the higher floors is devoted to its own class of goods, and every floor has its washing-rooms and saloons for the use of the customers. All the gas-jets are lighted simultaneously by an electric battery, producing a most brilliant effect. These upon the pillars of the dome have just been placed. The entire interior is white, the monotony being amply relieved by the brilliant colours of the goods. The ceilings are all to be frescoed. The view of each entire floor will be obstructed only by the numerous columns. These are of iron, and are adorned upon each of the four faces with alto-reliefs of Cupids and with vases of flowers. Six hundred clerks, male and female, are employed in the various sale departments, and 600 women are occupied in the preparation of clothing. The house contains a population equal to that of a small town.

EXTRAORDINARY TRAGEDY AT SEA.—The *Cork Herald* gives the particulars of a series of horrible and almost incredible occurrences which happened on board the Dutch vessel Finnechina, Captain Hotze commander, just arrived at Cork from South America. A Londoner, named Rogers, was one of the crew, and, either from insanity or cupidity (as he knew the captain had a large amount of money on board), he seems to have formed a plan for getting possession of the vessel by wholesale murder. On the fourth day after the ship left Buenos Ayres, Rogers took a favourable opportunity and pushed the first mate overboard. The cook, in response to his cries, ran to throw him a rope, when Rogers seized him by the legs and threw him into the sea also. Both these men were Dutchmen. The second mate, also a native of Holland, ran to help the drowning men, but Rogers endeavoured to kill him with an axe. He ran towards the cabin and jumped down the hatchway, upsetting the captain, who was running up, and, both rolling on the floor, Rogers secured the hatch above them, and made them prisoners. Two men remained on deck, one a Yankee, the other an Irishman, and these Rogers kept apart—one fore, one aft—by threatening to murder them, and compelling them to steer the vessel in turns. For four days the murderer remained master of the deck, not sleeping during the time. The captain fired twice at him during that period, but without wounding him seriously. Owing to a defect in the compass, he supposed the vessel was steering straight for the land, when in reality she was moving parallel to the coast. At the end of the fourth day sleep overcame him, and the Irishman, waiting for the opportunity, seized the axe, and, with one blow nearly severed his head from his body. He then relieved the captain and second mate, and the vessel made for Rio. After an investigation a fresh crew was shipped, and the Finnechina arrived in Cork harbour on Monday week.

FIDELITY TO PRINCIPLE.—It is well known that the events of the late American war have led to greatly-increased exertions on the part of the friends of Peace, on both sides of the Atlantic, to promulgate principles tending to prevent the recurrence of similar scenes of horror and bloodshed. Amongst the incidents of the war were some very striking illustrations of fidelity to Christian principle on the part of a small band of Quakers, Baptists, and others. One of these persons, a Friend, named William B. Hockett, of Randolph, North Carolina, was arrested under the Confederate Conscription Act, in June, 1863, and ordered to bear arms and serve in the ranks. This he firmly refused to do as being contrary to the spirit and precepts of Christianity. The Colonel of the regiment to which he was allotted was resolved to force him into submission. He therefore ordered Hockett to be laid on the ground, and a gun to be tied on his back. He refused to rise with the weapon. A party of soldiers were then ordered to stab him with their bayonets, but they only pierced his clothes. William Hockett expressed his wish to be respectful to authority, but stated that he was willing to lay down his life rather than disobey Christ. The soldiers were then drawn up to shoot him, and just as the order to fire was given, the prisoner prayed aloud, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Hereupon the soldiers refused to fire, some of them exclaiming, "We cannot shoot such a man!" The enraged Colonel then struck savagely at Hockett's head, but missed his aim. He then spurred his horse repeatedly to ride over the prisoner, but the horse sprang aside at each attempt, and the Friend remained unharmed. The Colonel then desisted from further assaults, but exclaimed that he would yet make Hockett fight or kill him. Two days afterwards the battle of Gettysburg took place. Hockett was too ill to move; but the Colonel took part in the conflict and was slain. A ter the battle Hockett was found by the Federal cavalry, and taken as a prisoner of war to Fort Delaware. Some of the Northern Quakers, hearing of this, memorialised the Government for his release. A telegram was promptly sent from the War Office, ordering his release upon the usual promise of allegiance to the United States. Although very loyal, he scrupled to promise to "defend" the Government in its military sense. Then he was told he must either promise this or be imprisoned till the end of the war. He chose the latter alternative. Eventually his true loyalty was explained and acknowledged; he received a full release, and was permitted to join his relatives in the Western States. Many similar instances of fidelity to principle are related, and their authenticity is fully substantiated.

POLICE.

STEALING "PUNCH."—At the Guildhall, on Monday, James Connor and Alfred Clarke were placed at the bar on remand, before Mr. Alderman Wilson, charged with being concerned, with two others not in custody, in stealing 300 stamped copies of *Punch* from the publishing-office in Fleet-street. On Wednesday, the 9th inst., a bundle containing 300 stamped copies of *Punch* was brought to that office from Messrs. Bradbury and Evans's, for publication. They were placed, with others, on a counter behind a partition in the office; and, while the publisher went to the far end of the premises, somebody walked in, leaned over the counter, and took the bundle in question, with which he got clear off, unperceived. As soon as the papers were missed, notice was given to the trade of the robbery and every precaution taken to prevent the sale of them. The matter was put into the hands of Hann and Hawkins, two active detective officers; and they soon traced them to a beer-shop in Fetter-lane, called the Three Lions, where, concealed behind some boards in a skittle-ground, they found 250 copies of the publication. They subsequently ascertained that the prisoners were in possession of the property shortly after it was stolen, and left it at a coffee-shop in Shoe-lane in the name of Clarke, whence it was subsequently fetched and taken to the Three Lions. They also obtained evidence that the prisoners and two others not in custody met there, untied the papers, and asked a newspaper hawker named Bayley to sell some of them for them. They offered him all he could make above a penny each for himself. He took twenty-six, and after selling nine discovered they were stamped, and brought the remainder back. He gave 9d. to one of the men, who divided it, giving 2½d. to Connor keeping 2½d. himself, and giving 2d. to each of the others. When Clarke was taken into custody he denied all knowledge of the papers, but said subsequently, before Connor, that he left them at the coffee-shop in Shoe-lane in the name of Clarke, and that Connor fetched them away. He also admitted the division of the money, as stated by other witnesses, and Connor made no reply to it. Michael O'Connell, 273, proved a summary conviction of twenty-one days' hard labour from this court against Connor on April 6, 1863, and on March 21, 1866, a conviction for felony at the Middlesex Sessions, for which he received twelve months' imprisonment, with hard labour. The prisoners, having been cautioned in the usual form, said they were asked by some other men to fetch the parcel from the coffee-shop, which they did, giving it to the persons who had spoken to them. Mr. Alderman Wilson fully committed the prisoners for trial.

WORKMEN'S RAILWAY TICKETS.—Mr. W. Mansell, the general manager of the North London Railway at Broad-street Terminus, was summoned before Mr. Newton, at Worship-street, on Monday, to answer a charge of having neglected and refused to issue a workman's ticket within a reasonable time after being required so to do. At the outset the magistrate's jurisdiction was challenged by the defendant's solicitor, and, after a protracted discussion, Mr. Newton, having read the words of the summons, said that it had been made out wrongly; it was not shown to be a question of tolls, and therefore jurisdiction he had none. He suggested that a fresh summons should be taken out, and worded in conformity with the section of the Act under which the present proceedings were taken. Mr. Cooper consented to have the summons amended, and, that having been done, the case proceeded. The complainant, Henry Marks, stated that he was a compositor, in the employ of Messrs. Waterlow and Sons, of London-wall, and that he resided at Churchhill-road, Hackney. There was a workmen's train advertised to run from Dalston Junction to Broad-street at 7.27 every morning, and travellers by it have the right to return by any train after six o'clock in the evening. Weekly tickets are issued at 1s. On Thursday, the 3rd inst., at five minutes before the 6.57 a.m. train started, he (complainant) applied at the booking-office of the Dalston Junction for a workman's ticket. The clerk replied that they were only issued now on Monday mornings, having been discontinued for the daily issuing since July last. Complainant then inquired what ticket he could take, and was told "One for the parliamentary," the fare by which was 2d. Complainant took the ticket; and at night, to return, had to pay another 4d., there not being any parliamentary carriages. He subsequently took out the present summons. On being cross-examined, complainant said he did not give his name or address; but was prepared to do so had he been asked. He asked for the ticket there and then. Mr. Cooper then said that there was one objection he took, that complainant had not furnished his name and address. Mr. Newton overruled that objection, saying that it was for the company to take the initiative in that respect. Mr. Cooper then said another objection he took was that, by their notice, all persons requiring workmen's tickets were bound to apply a reasonable time beforehand, so as to allow of inquiries being made as to their position. That had not been done, inasmuch as complainant wanted the ticket supplied upon his application. Mr. Newton thought the objection good, and therefore the present summons must drop; but another might be taken out, unless the complainant thought it would benefit him more by laying the case before the Board of Trade.

EXTENSIVE FRAUDS.—For some time past the detective force at Scotland-yard, under the direction of Inspector Williamson, assisted by Sergeant Palmer, have been busily occupied in tracing out a very extensive forgery upon the Paymaster-General at Whitehall. It appears that a person of the name of M'Machin, who held a situation as clerk in the Paymaster-General's office, was discharged some months since, and must have possessed himself of some of the forms used for officers' pension-warrants, as one of them was presented in the early part of October last for the sum of £856 18s. 3d. in favour of James Audrey, and duly paid by cheque on the Bank of England. That cheque was changed, and the notes so obtained have been distributed about at Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, and other places, where goods to a small amount have been purchased. Besides the man M'Machin, his brother-in-law, Joseph

